BLOOD ON THE SNOW! THE LONE WOLVES ARE HERE!

WARHAMMER MONTHLY

#53

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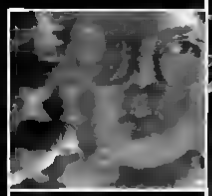
Damn and blast! We almost forgot our fourth birthday! Don't you hate it when that happens? We were so preoccupied slamming this issue together with all the force of a pair of powerfists crushing the skull of a hapless ork that we barely had time to register anything other than how cool our new Lone Wolves strip is. How stunning the Abnett/MacNeil team-up of The Warhammer is. How great it is that Darkblade is back with us, just as nasty as he ever was. With all these killer new strips to get ready for you, the fact that we have been pumping out this high quality, all-action mayhem for four whole years kind of passed us by. But now we've emerged from the workface of battle it's time to throw off our heavy black acolytes' robes and party till we... what do you mean get back to work, there's issue 54 to work on? But... but... Aww! We hate birthdays!

P.S. Rising production costs have meant we have had to raise the cover price this issue, after holding it down for more than two years. Don't forget you can always get a better deal by subscribing!



MARC GASCOIGNE

LONE WOLVES

Dead on their feet, frozen to the bone and surrounded by tyranids, only a miracle can save the men of the Imperial Guard.

DARKBLADE

Monsters are tamed, blades are readied and battlelines are drawn. The assault on Hag Graf begins this night!

BLACK LIBRARY DAY

The exciting occasion of last year's Black Library Day, plus details on this year's event.

THE WARHAMMER

The Chaos army of Vilgrim the Agonist have destroyed all before them. Now the defenders of Ostlitz know they are doomed.

DISPATCHES:

This April Warhammer Monthly's sister publication, Inferno!, is going Gaunt's Ghosts crazy to celebrate the release of *The Guns of Tanith* – the fifth novel in Dan Abnett's best selling series – and the stunning new Gaunt's Ghosts miniatures. Alongside an all-new short story you'll find the 'lost' Ghosts tale, *Vermilion Level*, another stunning illustrated feature from the mighty Ralph Horsley, a comprehensive gazetteer of the Tanith First and their allies and enemies, as well as a stunning 8 page comic strip courtesy of Dan and Paul 'Deff Skwadron' Jeacock. Inferno! 30 is on sale at the end of April but in the meantime check out these preview images from *The Emperor Protects*.

GAMES WORKSHOP

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LONE WOLVES

SCRIPT: DAN ABNETT ✦ ART: KARL RICHARDSON

DAY 32
CANNOT BELIEVE WE'VE ACTUALLY BEEN HERE ON SHADRAC THIRTY TWO (32) DAYS NOW. WHY ARE WE STILL ALIVE?

EDIBLES IN SHORT SUPPLY, SO WE'RE RATIONING WHAT WE HAVE. THE MEN ARE WEAK. FROSTBITE IN SOME. STILL NO VOX-CONTACT WITH THE FLEET. NO LONGER BELIEVE THERE IS A FLEET TO HEAR US ANY MORE.

THINK THE SWARMS HAVE TAKEN EVERYTHING. THE REST OF THE REGIMENT, THE ARMOUR, THE TROOP SHIPS. I THINK WE'RE THE ONLY ONES LEFT ALIVE.

BAENS, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOUR HAND?
OKAY.
IT'S FATIGUE. HOLD HIM WHILE I GIVE HIM A STIM-SHOT.
OH, EMPEROR'S GRACE!
ICE-BURN.
JUST MY LUCK. IT'S ROTTING SARGE...WHEN BLOOD POISON GETS TO ME, I WANT YOU TO MAKE IT QUICK FOR ME. OKAY?
NO MORE TALK LIKE THAT, BAENS! WE'RE ALL GETTING OUT! ALL OF US!
BUT THE SWARMS...
WE'VE KEPT OUT OF THEIR WAY FOR OVER THIRTY DAYS! WE CAN DO THIS!
DAMMIT! THE EMPEROR PROTECTS! IF IT COMES TO IT, HE'LL SEND A MIRACLE!
I TELL BAENS WE'LL GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE.
RIGHT.
WHO THE HELL AM I KIDDING?

NIGHTFALL.
WE PITCH ON A SHELF ABOVE THE ICE-DESERT. ENOUGH CHEMICAL LAMPS AND FLAMER FUEL FOR MAYBE ONE MORE NIGHT.

IN THE NIGHT, WE LOSE A MAN. TROOPER OLSON.
WE DON'T KNOW IT UNTIL DAWN. SEEMS HE JUST GOT OUT OF HIS BEDROLL AND WALKED AWAY. BAEMS TELLS ME OLSON WAS SHOWING SYMPTOMS OF INCIPIENT ICE-MADNESS.

DAY 33.
TROOPERS ELGIN AND FRANCH FIND OLSON JUST BEFORE NOON.
WHAT? WHAT DID-
OH HELL
HELL IS RIGHT, MARLIN. W-
SERGEANT! LOOK! LOOK!

USE THE DISTANCE! PICK YOUR TARGETS!
THE EMPEROR PROTECTS! FIRE AT WILL!

WE DRIVE THEM OFF UNTIL NIGHTFALL. SMADE RECKONS THE LAST OF THE FOEL WILL BORN FOR ABOUT TWO MORE HOURS. I CAN HEAR THEM OUT THERE, CHITTERING IN THE DARK.

THEY'RE GATHERING OUT THERE. I SEE THE FIRELIGHT GLINT ON EYES AND SMOOTH BONE OCCASIONALLY. THEY OWN THIS WORLD NOW.
WE'RE JUST A LOOSE END TO BE TIDIED UP.
THAT MIRACLE. YOU THINK THE EMPEROR MIGHT SPARE IT NOW, SERGEANT?
THE EMPEROR *PROTECTS*, ELGIN.
HUHN! THE EMPEROR DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WE'RE *HERE!*
THAT'S IT, SARGE! THE FUEL'S OUT!
STAND READY! *STAND READY!*
HERE IT COMES.

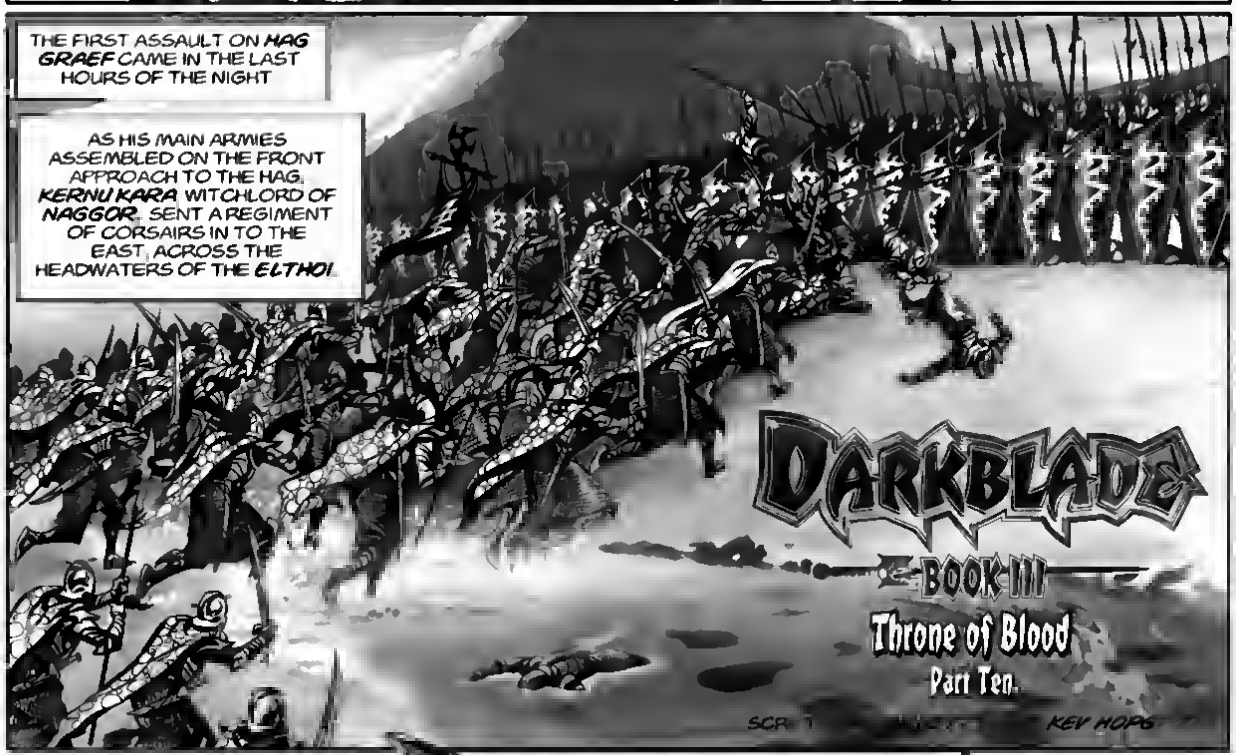
WHAT THE HELL WAS TH-

SPACE WOLVES. GREAT GODS!
FORWARD COMMAND NEVER TOLD US THAT THE MIGHTY ADEPTUS ASTARTES WERE WERE ON SHADRAC.
WAS I WRONG, OR AM I DREAMING?

OR IS THIS THE MIRACLE?

THEY'RE GONE BEFORE I CAN FIND OUT. GONE WITH THE NIGHT, LEAVING THEIR KILLS COVERING THE ICE.
LET'S GO.
TO *FIND* THEM. TO FIND THE WOLVES. TURNS OUT, WE'RE NOT *ALONE* HERE AFTER ALL.
WHERE?
NOW AT LAST WE HAVE SOMETHING T
BATTERY LOW
BATTERY LOW
TO BE CONTINUED

NAGGOR! AAYYYEE!!HHH! NAGGOR! FOR THE ARK!


THE FIRST ASSAULT ON HAG GRAEF CAME IN THE LAST HOURS OF THE NIGHT
AS HIS MAIN ARMIES ASSEMBLED ON THE FRONT APPROACH TO THE HAG, KERNU KARA WITCHLORD OF NAGGOR, SENT A REGIMENT OF CORSAIRS IN TO THE EAST, ACROSS THE HEADWATERS OF THE ELTHOI.
DARKBLADE
BOOK III
Throne of Blood
Part Ten
KEV HOPE

BUT THE DRACHAU OF HAG GRAEF HAD BLOCKED THAT ROUTE WITH A SHIELD WALL COMMANDED BY LORD SARRIAN CLAWFIST.
RISE UP! RISE UP, WARRIORS OF THE HAG! HOLD THE LINE!

THE GROUND SHOOK, AND THE WATERS OF THE ELTHOI WENT INK-DARK WITH BLOOD.
AFTER AN HOUR OF RESISTANCE, SARRIAN'S SHIELD WALL SEEMED TO CRUMBLE UNDER THE RELENTLESS BLOWS OF THE CORSAIR AXES.
BUT IT WAS A FEINT. THE SHIELD WALL HAD HELD THE CORSAIRS LONG ENOUGH FOR THEM TO HAVE NO MOMENTUM LEFT WHEN THE COUNTER-STRIKE CAME.
COLD ONE CAVALRY, CHARGING HARD, KHEITAINS HELD LOW.
THOSE OF THE BLACK ARK NOT CRUSHED BY THE CHARGE WERE SLAUGHTERED BY THE REAPER BOLT THROWERS ON THE SCARP'S.
LORD SARRIAN WAS ELATED BY THE VICTORY. FIRST BLOOD HAD GONE TO THE HAG.
AND THEN...

...THEN SARRIAN SAW WHAT LAY BEHIND THE CORSAIRS.
NOOOOO!

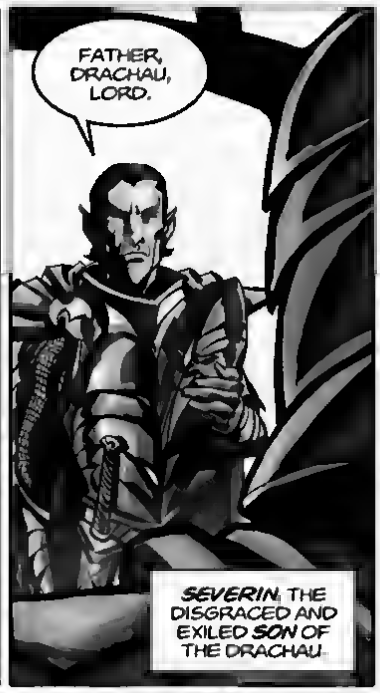
KREEEEEAK!
DARKBLADE?
WHAT?
YOU WILL SHOW ME RESPECT. I AM STILL DRACHAU OF HAG GRAEF.
YES, YOU ARE. AND YOU HAVE COME TO EXECUTE ME YOURSELF.
SHHHLLINNKKK!
NO.
SHHTANGGG!

LADY ELDIRE SPOKE ON YOUR BEHALF, MALUS.
SHE REVEALED TO ME THE WAY THE SORCERY OF THE BLACK ARK HAD CURSED YOU AND TURNED YOU INTO A UNWITTING WEAPON OF CONFUSION.
THE FORCES OF NAGGOR ARE AT MY GATES, DARKBLADE.
THE NIGHT IS ALIVE WITH THEIR WAR-CRIES AND THE JANGLING OF THEIR SPIRIT BELLS.
ALREADY, LORD SARRIAN AND LORD VORMIN HAVE FALLEN IN THE FIRST WAVES OF ATTACK.
I NEED EVERY GOOD COMMANDER I CAN FIND.
AND THERE ARE FEW AS WELL-VERSED IN WARCRAFT AS YOU, MALUS DARKBLADE.
WILL YOU TAKE ARMS FOR THE HAG?
IT IS MY BIRTH-DUTY, LORD DRACHAU.
AT DAWN, SORCERESSES FROM THE HAG'S CONVENT, LED BY THE WITCH-PRIESTESS ELDIRE, WRITHED AND SCREAMED IN TRANCED ECSTASIES AS THEY CAST CYCLONES OF WARDING MAGIC INTO THE AIR.
THE SHEER POWER OF THIS SORCERY GROUNDED THE DOOM-WINGS OF THE BLACK ARK'S WITCHGUARD AND BANISHED THE FEARSOME NAGGORITE MURDER-HOUNDS.
CAPITALSING ON THIS COVER, LORD KARONDAI LED A STRIKE FORCE OUT FROM THE HAG GATES...

...CUTTING INTO THE MAIN ADVANCE OF THE NAGGOR FORCES SO HARD, THE WARRIORS OF THE BLACK ARK BROKE AND FLED.
BUT THERE WAS NO WHERE TO FLEE TO.
DARKBLADE, AND HIS LIEUTENANT SILAR THORNBLOOD, DROVE IN FROM THE WEST GATES IN A PINCER THAT OBLITERATED THOSE KARONDAI HAD FORCED INTO FLIGHT.
THE WARPSWORD OF KHAINE SCREAMING IN HIS FIST, DARKBLADE PERSONALLY OVERTHREW THE BLACK ARK'S WAR BEASTS THAT ELDIRE'S MAGIC HAD NOT MUZZLED
IT WAS A FAMOUS VICTORY. THE LEGIONS OF NAGGOR HAD BEEN DRIVEN BACK, LICKING THEIR WOUNDS.
THOSE IN THE HAG BELIEVED IT WOULD BE A DAY OR TWO BEFORE THE NAGGORITES WOULD TRY ANOTHER ASSAULT.
THE NEXT MOVE TOOK THEM ALL BY SURPRISE.

AT NOON, A LONE RIDER APPROACHED THE HAG FROM THE ENEMY LINES.
MOON-BLOOMS DECORATED HIS SPEAR TIP IN A GARLAND, THE SIGN OF TRUCE AND PARLEY.
THE GATE GUARDS LET HIM IN, BELIEVING HIM TO BE A NAGGORITE COME TO BROKER PEACE.

BUT HE WAS NOT. HE WAS A DRUCHII OF HAG GRAEF.


FATHER, DRACHAU, LORD.
SEVERIN, THE DISGRACED AND EXILED SON OF THE DRACHAU.

SEVERIN, SON-THAT-WAS-AND-IS-NOT.
YOU RIDE WITH NAGGOR NOW?
NO, SIR. I COME TO FORGE PEACE. I HAVE SPOKEN WITH THE WITCH LORD AND I HAVE LEARNED OF HIS WRATH.

THOUGH THEY ASSAULT YOUR WALLS, FATHER, THE BLACK ARK'S DISPUTE IS NOT WITH HAG GRAEF.
GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT, AND THEY WILL WITHDRAW, WITH NO FURTHER ENMITY REMAINING BETWEEN THE HAG AND THE ARK.
AND WHAT IS IT THEY WANT?
THEY WANT THE DRUCHII WHO RANSACKED THE ARK AND STOLE THE ORB OF MALKIN, WHO MURDERED THE SORCERESS BELLADON AND SLEW THE WITCHLORD BALNETH BALE.
THEY WANT MALUS DARKBLADE.
NEXT
OLD SCORES

VILGRIM THE AGONIST RAISES THE WARHAMMER HIGH. HIS GRIP IS TIGHT AND TRUE
HIS RIDERS SEE IT AND THEY ROAR OUT THEIR BATTLE-CHANT.
THERE WILL BE BLOOD ON THE FIELDS OF OSTLITZ BEFORE NIGHTFALL.
THE WARHAMMER
Script: Dan Abnett • Art: Colin MacNeil
Letters: Fiona Stephenson

THEN VILGRIM GIVES THE WORD--
WASTE THIS PLACE!
--AND THE DEATH OF THE NORTHERN IMPERIAL BURG OSTUTZ BEGINS
GREAT GODS! THEY'RE COMING FROM THE FLANK!
THEY'RE COMING FROM THE FLANK! TURN THE GUNS! TURN THE BLOODY GUNS, FOR PITY'S SAKE!

THE AGONIST THE THRICE-DAMNED AGONIST
HOW DOES HE DO THAT? HOW DOES HE ALWAYS KNOW?
ALWAYS, HE STRIKES WHERE THE DEFENCES ARE WEAKEST. LIKE A BLOODY CHARM
IT WAS THE SAME AT MERLINGE... OOTBURG... NADEL... EVERY DAMN ONE OF HIS RAIDS.
SIGMAR'S BONES, GENERAL! WE'RE ALL AWARE OF HIS MURDEROUS CRIMES!
DO SOMETHING! YOU MUST DO SOMETHING!
WHAT? EXACTLY BURGOMEISTER KNITTEL? TURN BACK THE CLOCK?
WE HAD FOUR DAYS TO PREPARE! OUR SCOUTS SAID HE WAS COMING FROM THE NORTHEAST AND WE LAID OUR CANNON AND MORTARS ACCORDINGLY!
NOW HE COMES UPON US FROM THE WEST! THE WEST! AS IF BY SOME SORCERY HE KNOWS EXACTLY WHERE TO STRIKE TO DRAW THE MOST BLOOD!
IF THE CREWS CAN TURN THE GUNS IN TIME PERHAPS...
A-ARE YOU SAYING WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE?
MY DEAR BURGOMEISTER...

"...WE'RE ALREADY DYING "
COME AROUND! COME AROUND! THEY'RE FLANKING US! FIRE AT WILL!
FIRE AT W--- AAGHHH!

PUT YOUR BACKS INTO IT! ROLL THEM ROUND!
JOOL! COVER THE GUNS! BUY THEM WHAT LITTLE TIME YOU CAN!
YOU HEARD THE SERGEANT, MEN...
...HOLD THE LINE AND GIVE THEM HELL!

THE AGONIST

WASTE IT! WASTE THIS PLACE!
RAAAGHHH!

WARM
THE HAMMER *THROBS* WITH HEAT. WAR-HEAT. *BATTLE-HEAT.*
FOR A *SECOND* HE WONDERS IF IT IS CURSED.
BUT THERE'S NO TIME TO THINK ABOUT *THAT.*

THE AGONIST IS DEAD! THE AGONIST IS DEAD!
IT'S NOT A CURSE HE KNOWS THAT NOW WITH COMPLETE CERTAINTY.
IT'S SIMPLY A HUNGER FOR GLORY. THE WARHAMMER YEARNS ONLY FOR TRIUMPH IN THE HEAT OF WAR
AND IF THE HANDS THAT CLASP IT ARE WORTHY ENOUGH, TRIUMPH IS EXACTLY WHERE IT WILL TAKE THEM.
PRAISE SIGMAR! PRAISE SIGMAR THIS DAY!
THEY'RE BROKEN, BURGOMEISTER! THE FOE IS TURNING!
I DON'T KNOW HOW IN THE NAME OF BLOODY FATE IT HAPPENED, BUT WE'VE GOT THEM ON THE RUN!
BLESSED SIGMAR MUST LOVE OSTLITZ, BURGOMEISTER. THEY'VE FINALLY ENDED THE AGONIST'S RUN OF LUC...

"..AND GIVEN HIS GOOD FORTUNE TO *US!*"
THE MEN OF OSTLITZ SING OUT THE *VICTORY HYMN* OF THE EMPIRE
GERD JODL RAISES THE WARHAMMER HIGH. HIS GRIP IS *TIGHT* AND *TRUE*
THE BEGINNING...

NEW FROM THE BLACK LIBRARY

Here in the claustrophobic cloisters of the Black Library April has been officially renamed the Month of Gaunt! It celebrates the release of The Guns of Tanith, the fifth novel in the outstanding Gaunt's Ghosts series by Warhammer Monthly's own scribe Dan Abnett, the quill behind every single strip in this issue as well as fan-favourites Titan and Inquisitor. The Month of Gaunt continues in our sister publication Inferno! whose thirtieth issue will be an all-Gaunt's Ghost special – more details of that next issue.

Also released over the month is Warblade, the third and final novel in the epic Konrad trilogy of a young hero's powerful destiny against the machinations of the dark gods.

Available right now, however, is the first in our exclusive subscriber-only releases: a special 'copper-finish' Kal Jerico collectors bust, awesome Warhammer and Chaos Raptor posters and a stylish Daemonifuge t-shirt. However, you can only order these ultra-limited edition products if you are a Warhammer Monthly subscriber. See elsewhere in this issue for more details.

www.blacklibrary.co.uk

INCOMING

Brother Banebiade, I have some comments for you re WHM 50:

The end of Mordheim: it wes somehow sad to see Ulli and Marquand murder each other but should heve been expected. It was, I suppose, the perfect end to the series.

Speaking of Mordheim, if Hellbrandt Grimm thinks he's such en ewesome bed@$$, why doesn't he ever go there?

I know time and space are brief in the letters pege, Brother, so I'll end this message with but one more question: Does Gutspew smell as bed as he looks? If he does I'm surprised you don't wear your helmet more...

For the Emperor!

Lord Russ Bullmen – USA

Indeed Ulli & Marquand doing each other in was a truly fitting end for the series, I only wish Brother Rennie had done it sooner and spared us all their villainy and heresy. However, a nasty rumour has reached my ears that the acolytes of the Black Library are to release a graphic novel cataloguing the Mordheim miscreants' crimes in their entirety this very month. If proved true rest assured I'll be introducing them to the business end of my bolter!

Brother Scanlon has been informed of your desire to see the mercenary Grimm in the environs of Mordheim but essures me that Hellbrandt is going to be far too busy battling with orcs, daemons and vagabonds for the foreseeable future to take a holiday.

And yes, Gutspew does smell as bad as he looks and I would wear my helmet more except that putrid wretch's pet rats are currently nesting in it. Still, at least he gave me that one-way ticket to Armageddon to make up for it...

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BLOODQUEST III

HUNGRY FOR MORE?

MINUTEMEN ABADDON